A SHORT HISTORY OF

Old Bristol

Pottery & Porcelain,

Marks, &c.

By J. P. WAY,

Antique Art Gallery, 69 Park Street,

BRISTOL.

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Bristol Delft made by Frank, decorated with sprinkled ground, and panels reserved and decorated in blue.

Delft Ware.

BRISTOL claims to have made pottery at a period as remote as Edward I. Whenever excavations have been made in the City, along the north bank of the river from Bristol Bridge, remains of pottery and shard heaps have been discovered.

Two factories are known, one belonging to the Frank family, situated at Redcliffe Backs from about 1699 until 1777, when it was removed to Water Lane; this pottery was sold to Joseph Ring in 1784. The other pottery belonged to Joseph Flower, and was situated on the Quay; it was removed to 5 Corn Street in 1777.

The delft made by Frank is somewhat crude. The enamel of early specimens has a greenish-blue

tint, the decoration is principally blue on white ground, rough landscapes and figures and occasionally copies of Chinese subjects (probably copied from Oriental china, which at this period was imported in large quantities, but only obtainable by the rich, the poorer classes using the delft ware). A few pieces may be met with, decorated with a sprinkled ground of magnese purple with panels reserved and decorated in blue.

Wall tiles were also made as well as the usual plates, bowls, posset pots, etc.

The delft made by Flower was of better quality than Franks—thinner, and having a good clear glaze and decoration finer, somewhat resembling the Dutch ware, the use of a pure white over the tin enamel is supposed to have been confined to Bristol and produced at this factory.

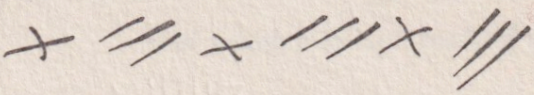
Bristol Delft Plate made by Joseph Flower about 1777,
shewing pure white decoration over the glaze.
(Bianco sopra bianco.)

Frank's Brislington Delft, blue, red, and green decoration on white ground.

Brislington Delft.

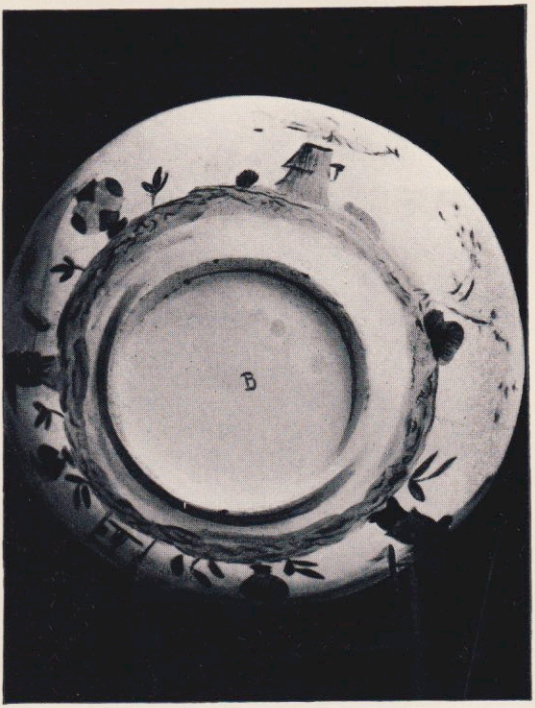
Richard Frank, the Bristol potter, had a pottery and residence at Brislington, and daily walked to and from Bristol. The factory is believed to have been closed in 1777, when Frank removed his Redcliffe works to Water Lane.

A great number of plates, dishes, porringers, etc., were made at Brislington. The delft is of good quality, with a bluish glaze, and generally decorated in colours—blue, red-brown, and green—and many of the circular dishes, etc., are marked round the rim at back with alternate cross and dash, thus—



The ware decorated with copper lustre attributed to Brislington is no doubt Spanish. Vessels trading at this period from Spain to Bristol, bringing copper ore for the smelting works at Crew's Hole situated on the opposite bank of the river to Brislington, brought the ware with them and left pieces behind, or sold it to people in the district, and there being a pottery at Brislington, at later times when these pieces turned up in cottages, etc., they were thought to be of local make. The body of the Spanish ware is quite different to the true Brislington delft.

A great many plates, circular dishes, etc., made at a factory founded about 1730, by Nathaniel Ireson, at Wincanton, Somerset, have been mistaken for Bristol and Brislington delft. The body of Wincanton is of lighter colour than Bristol, the glaze more brilliant, and of a darker blue.



Bristol Hard Porcelain decorated with Oriental design.

Bristol China.

The manufacture of true porcelain had but a short life in England, for the attempt to imitate the hard paste porcelain of China, which had hitherto baffled all the potters, we have to thank the two men through whose energy and scientific knowledge the difficulties of manufacture were overcome; in the first place, Cookworthy, the Quaker, of Plymouth; secondly, Champion, of Bristol, the friend of Burke. There must have been many experiments with the new material before 1768, when Cookworthy took out his patent, and started his factory at Plymouth, under the title of "Plymouth New Invented Porcelain Manufactory." In 1770 the manufacture was transplanted from

Plymouth to a small factory in Castle Green, Bristol, where Richard Champion had been engaged in making china since 1768.

In 1773 Richard Champion bought the patent from William Cookworthy, chemist and porcelain maker, who was the first producer of hard porcelain in this country. In 1775 Champion presented a petition to the House of Commons to be granted the patent for a further fourteen years. He was vigorously opposed by Josiah Wedgwood, but eventually the patent was granted.

In 1774 Edmund Burke was nominated for Bristol. A fierce election followed, in which Burke was returned. During the election he was a guest of a Mr. and Mrs. J. Smith, of 19 Queen Square, Bristol. It was then that Burke ordered a splendid set of China from Champion and presented it to

Mrs. Smith. It was beautifully decorated with gold scrolls, wreaths of laurel, and initials "S.S." in tiny rose-buds. A specimen of this service can be seen at the Bristol Art Gallery in the fine collection of Bristol china presented to the City by Alfred Trapnell, Esq.

The manufacture of this beautiful China and loss of business through the American War, ruined Champion, and his patent right was sold in 1781 to a company of Staffordshire potters, who continued the manufacture at New Hall for some short time. Thus ended Bristol and Plymouth China.

Champion left England and died in South Carolina, 1791.

As in the case of Worcester and other factories, Champion took Oriental designs, and was very successful in imitating commoner forms of Chinese.

A special characteristic of the Bristol China is spiral ridges running transversely round the body of the piece, often hardly noticeable, unless viewed in a favourable light, the result of the unequal pressure of the " thrower's " hand.

Among the decorators of Bristol was Henry Bone, afterwards an R.A. and miniature enameller to the Royal Family. Bone's mark on pieces decorated by him is said to be No. 1, or ·/..

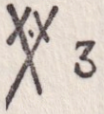
Bristol decorators had a partiality for wreaths and festoons and small detached bouquets of flowers. Several fine specimens of Bristol are not marked.

Figures of fine quality were also made, beautifully modelled and decorated. The fine set of " Seasons," " Four Quarters of the Globe," etc., can be seen in the Alfred Trapnell gift at the Art Gallery.

Perhaps what may be regarded as the most

Bristol China Custard Cup and Cover, with festoon decoration.

remarkable and certainly the most original work produced by Champion are the little circular or oval plaques and groups of white biscuit, the medallions vary from four to nine inches in diameter, the central field contains a coat of arms modelled in low relief, or more rarely a portrait bust surrounded by a wreath of flowers. The modelling of these minute leaves and blossoms has never been approached for sharpness and finish in this or any other material.



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PLYMOUTH—BRISTOL.

Plymouth, 1768. W. Cookworthy took out a patent for hard porcelain.

F.

1 Plymouth. Mark, the sign for Jupiter and for tin, in reference to Cornwall, where the kaolin was discovered. On early pieces, in blue, thick and clumsy ; later, neatly drawn in red, blue or gold.

* "William Cookworthy, Factory, Plymouth, 1770." On a butter-boat. Dr. Ashford.

Bristol, 1770. Cookworthy transferred his manufacture to Champion's works at Bristol, and 1773 sold him the patent.

2 and 3 Bristol. Usual mark, a cross in blue, slate, or impressed, usually accompanied by numbers denoting the different decorators, from 1 to 24. No. 1, that of Bone the enameller.

4 to 8 Bristol. B was also a common mark : varieties.

9 Bristol. Plymouth and Bristol marks combined.

10 Bristol. Mark unexplained ; the cross, blue ; the rest, lake. On pieces of the Smith tea-service.

11 Bristol. John Britain, Champion's foreman.

12 Bristol. Mark impressed, on a pair of biscuit figures.

13 Bristol. T embossed or raised ; the cross, blue.

14 to 16 Bristol. Dresden marks sometimes affixed.

17 Bristol. Dresden and Bristol marks combined.

18 Bristol. Probably a workman's mark.

Bristol earthenware. P impressed. Pountney's mark.

An impressed cross. Ring. Temple Backs. Michael Edkins : his initials. "Bristol Pottery," 1814, and Pountney and Allies, impressed.

19, 20 and 21 Bristol. On a figure.

Bristol Pottery.

IN 1784, Joseph Ring having purchased Frank's pottery, situated at Water Lane, Temple Backs, the manufacture of delft was soon superseded by a much finer quality ware, Wedgwood was making the well-known Queen's, and Leeds the fine straw-coloured ware, and to compete with these, Ring commenced to make the fine pottery or cream ware, which we occasionally find in old collections in this neighbourhood, and many fine specimens of which are in the Bristol Room at the Art Gallery—consisting of small barrels, puzzle jugs, mugs, plates, etc. Some of these are equal in beauty and decoration to the finest Staffordshire productions of the period.

Bristol Pottery Cream Ware Barrel.

Bristol Pottery Puzzle Jug, decorated with Fifield's typical bouquet of flowers.

1788. Mr. Ring took Messrs. Taylor and Carter into partnership, and the firm traded as Ring and Taylor. Mr. Ring was killed at the pottery by part of a roof falling upon him in April, 1788, and was succeeded by his widow, who had always taken an active part in the business.

On 5th April, 1813, a new partnership was entered into between Henry Carter, John D. Pountney, and Joseph Ring, son of the late partner. Mr. Ring died on the day the Deed was signed. Mr. Carter continued in the firm until 1816, and was then succeeded by Mr. Edward Allies.

Messrs. Pountney and Allies occupied the pottery in 1825, and employed about 200 persons. The articles produced were similar to those produced by the superior Staffordshire potteries — quantities of earthenware, such as dinner services and domestic

utensils, etc. A number of the latter were decorated with Bristol views printed in blue on white ground—Redcliff Church from the Harbour; the Avon from Hotwells; St. Vincent's Rocks, etc.; a large export trade being done with America and the colonies.

Time brings changes, and the manufacture of the cream ware soon became obsolete. On some of the pieces made at this period may be found the impressed marks, P—Pountney—Pountney & Allies.

William Fifield was the principal decorator at this pottery from the start, and worked there for nearly 50 years. His work was somewhat crude—the pieces generally met with are decorated with bouquets of flowers, consisting of roses, tulips, forget-me-nots, etc., painted in vivid colours, bright red, emerald green, and cobalt blue, very effective, and in a style quite his own (see bouquet on puzzle jug, illustrated).

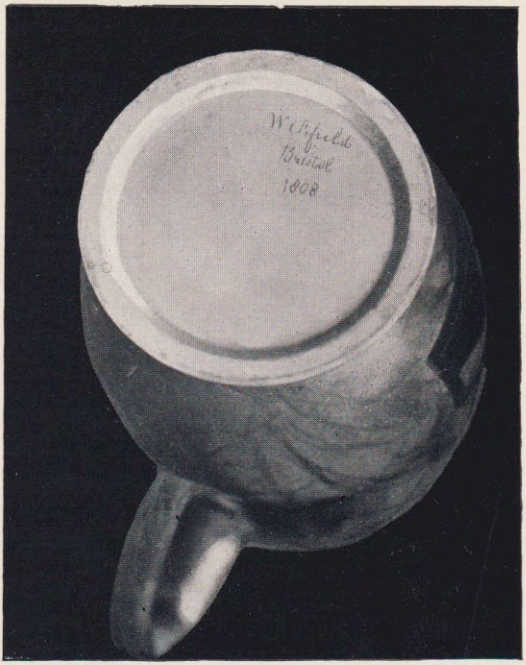
Bristol Pottery Jug, marked Pountney & Allies, impressed.

Fifield was capable of much better work, as may be seen on the small circular medallions, painted with landscapes, figures, etc., which are occasionally found ; and the mythological subject painted on the mug illustrated, one of Fifield's best efforts, and no doubt he considered it so, as he signed his name, with date, on the bottom of the piece.

Reference Books:—

Catalogue of Pottery in British Museum.
Chaffers Marks and Monograms.
China Collector's Companion.
Owens: Two Centuries of Ceramic Art in Bristol.
Chats on China, etc.

Bristol Pottery Cup, decorated with mythological subject painted by Fifield.



Bottom of Cup, shewing Fifield's signature and date.

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J. P. WAY,

COLLECTOR OF ANTIQUES,

Antique Art Gallery, 69 Park Street, Bristol.

On Beginning to Collect.

A WORD in the ear of the would-be amateurs, the people who "would like to collect if they knew anything at all about it," as they say. Listen. Seven dealers out of every ten know next to nothing about it now, and knew nothing at all about it when they began. This is an admitted fact, as a rule; the dealers themselves would confess it freely. Collecting is an art, not a business. And the average dealer knows rather less about it than does the average amateur. The average dealers learn what they know from their customers; they have said so again and again.

"I should very much like to collect old colour-prints, old coins and medals, Georgian furniture," say Mr. Brown, Mr. Jones, Mr. Robinson; "I should like to fill the drawing-room cabinet with good old China," say unanimously their respective wives.

"But we don't know how," they go on, with one voice; "it would cost a fortune—the dealers would rook us." My dear Mr. and Mrs. Brown, Jones, and Robinson, I assure you, nothing of the sort.

"It must be so difficult to become a judge," they say. Oh, no. Nothing is easier and pleasanter than to learn when one hankers to learn. Besides, one learns by bits. One learns to collect by collecting.

"But the real thing costs so much." Do they? People have to buy furniture and mantelpiece ornaments of one kind or another, and it is still a fact that you can buy fine old china for less than the price of china that is fine and new. A room full of good old furniture, picked up a piece at a time, will cost you less than a room full of furniture that is both new and good. And the old furniture is much the more comfortable to live with, you will find.

"But surely all the real bargains have been picked up long ago," says the doubter. My dear would-be amateur, bargains go begging nearly every day. "But even bargains cost you a lot, to

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Old Needlework Pictures. Carved Ivory Figures. Old Cut Glass. Old Enamels. Old Needlework Samplers, etc.

begin with," says the doubter. Do they? Listen again. To my certain knowledge, the following are bargains picked up for a few shillings each by the same person during the past few months. And these are but a few out of many. A miniature of Cardinal Richelieu in oils on copper, that shows the patina (or chemical influence of light and air) that only comes with age—three and sixpence. A Marseilles plate, worth six or seven louis—four shillings. An old silver and onyx snuff-box—two shillings. An eighteenth century French colour-print, "La Paysanne,"—four and sixpence. A fine miniature, signed by Pasquier, of Caroline, Consort of George Prince Regent, on ivory—seven shillings. A Chelsea china Cupid—three and sixpence. A water-colour sketch, by David Cox, for his famous "Welsh Funeral" picture—half-a-crown. So much for bargains in shillings. When it comes to bargains in sovereigns the chances are better and more numerous still.

It is true that prices are hardening, because times are better again, through the upward move in

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ADAMS AND HEPPLEWHITE.

Inspection Invited.

SHOW ROOM.

general trade. So the time to begin to collect is Now. The opportunity can never be more favourable, and it will grow less favourable to the collector year by year. Porcelain, for instance; this is a good time for selling old china; dealers will tell you that porcelain has paid them better than any other kind of stock of late. This is therefore a good time for buying old china—at any rate, so good a time is not likely to come again. The grumble of the smaller dealers is always that they can't pick up cheap china nowadays; they mean the pieces of the less rare makes of china, which they used to buy for a few pence each. They assure you that any kind of old china—even chipped—is being hunted for more than ever. If you mean to begin to hunt for it, therefore, you had better begin "right now."

The fact is that the level of taste is rising. You can see that in picture framers' shop windows. You can see it even in the cheaper furniture shops of Tottenham Court Road. The number of collectors is increasing rapidly, whether for pleasure or for profit,

or for both ; collecting is no longer confined to the wealthy or moderately rich, or the leisured classes. Now is the time to begin collecting, if ever. People who hanker to " collect," and do not soon begin to collect, may find it too late before long to collect at prices which their purses can command.

People of moderate incomes, I mean ; it is people of moderate incomes who are snapping up the bargains in shillings to-day. I am not writing here for the bidder at Christie's, for the man who can give £7,000 for a couple of square yards of antique tapestry, and so forth. I am writing for the man or woman in the villa, in the flat, in the area house in a row—for people of cultivation, but not riches, who must look twice at every pound they spend on unnecessaries, yet who long to surround themselves with beautiful old objects, and to bring up their children in something like an atmosphere of art. It is precisely these who most hanker, yet most fear to begin to collect, is it not ?

J. H. YOXALL, M.P.,

In *London Opinion.*

Old
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To Collectors.

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J. P. WAY, Antique Art Gallery,

69, PARK STREET, BRISTOL.

Concerning Fine Mezzotint Engravings.

UNDER the attractive title of "Some Gossip about Old Prints," Colonel á Court discourses, in the November number of *Blackwood's Magazine*, upon the recent growth of the appreciation of fine English engravings of the great period. His article bears especial reference to the mezzotints of the last thirty years of the Eighteenth Century, when a band of engravers of unrivalled brilliance were immortalising Sir Joshua, as he had prophesied that they would. Valentine Green, J. R. Smith, S. W. Reynolds, and the rest of them, engraved in mezzotint—the delightful art which Prince Rupert, the last man in the world who might have been expected to lay aside the sword for the engraver's "cradle," long had the credit of inventing, and in which he certainly worked. The velvety softness of their

prints, the depth and luminosity of their tones, the beauty and charm of the portraits of women which they were chiefly engaged in translating into a black-and-white that had some of the most engaging qualities of colours, have placed their achievements in a position unique in the history of engraving. Thanks to the men of that generation who worked on steadily at their art, although the world of their day was one vast theatre of battle, murder, and sudden death, England acquired an unassailable monopoly of that tender and poetical form of engraving which obtains its results by masses and tones instead of by lines. They had, no doubt, the incomparable material provided by a series of portrait-painters, to whom flocked all the grace, and dignity, and loveliness of the time. Prints from these full-lengths now very often command in the auction room far larger sums than the artists received for the originals, and the collection of fine mezzotints has become an investment for the rich rather than a hobby for men of moderate means. No doubt the instructed

connoisseur who keeps his eyes open, and buys with judgment, may, as Colonel á Court suggests, sometimes enjoy an opportunity of using his knowledge to good purpose ; but it would probably be impossible to form, save at fabulous cost, if at all, another such portfolio of mezzotints as that which the late Lord Cheylesmore has bequeathed to the British Museum, where the print room was already stored with a marvellous aggregation of treasures of all schools. When the projected Loan Exhibition of Engraving and Etching is held at South Kensington next spring, a considerable increase of interest in the subject may be looked for, and those who have but little acquaintance with it will probably be very much surprised at the richness and variety of the record which the English school, at its most attractive period, has left behind it. Such a gathering cannot, of course, be restricted to one medium, however artistically satisfying it may be. It must needs take account of copper and steel engravings—line, stipple, aquatint, and etching,—and in all these directions British art did

much more than merely hold its own. Colonel á Court does not agree with the pessimists who protest that prices for prints which frequently run up to a thousand guineas, are purely artificial, the interested creation of "rings" of astute dealers. The experience of the last few years in all departments of collecting suggests that he is right, and that figures are much more likely to increase than to fall. Values are rising all round for fine and scarce things—books and china, pictures and furniture,—and the keener the competition of American millionaires with English collectors becomes, the greater will be the profit realised by those who have bought in the past with prudence and judgment. *In any case, and apart altogether from the personal pleasure of the pursuit, the sinking of money in objects of art and curiosity is likely to be a better investment, in the long run, than embarking it in most of those "chances of a lifetime" with which the unwary and inexperienced are painfully familiar.* Still, most men, it is to be supposed, who collect anything do so, in the first instance, because they delight in the

subject ; and certainly there are few more fascinating hobbies than amassing fine prints. Even those who fail to appreciate old china, old books, or Chippendale arm chairs, are often captivated at once by a brilliant engraving, which makes a direct and graphic appeal to the latent artistic faculty. And the modest collector, whatever his fancy, who possesses knowledge and taste, will always enjoy advantages in the gratification of his passion which other men can only secure by the expenditure of money.

—From the *Standard*.

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